



Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiative (FSSI)  
Office Supply Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPAs)

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**  
**Questions from Agency Purchasing Authorities and Cardholders**

**1. Where do I go for more information, and whom do I contact?**

Questions on the Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiative Second Generation Office Supplies (FSSI OS2) BPAs may be sent to [fssi.officesupplies@gsa.gov](mailto:fssi.officesupplies@gsa.gov). You may also contact Contracting Office Prince Choudhury at 212-264-3025. Please also visit the FSSI OS2 website at <http://www.gsa.gov/fssiofficesupplies>.

**2. What is a FSSI Office Supplies Second Generation (FSSI OS2) BPA?**

A FSSI OS2 BPA is an agreement that was established off of GSA Multiple Award Schedule 75 Contract, to enable all federal agencies to fill their repetitive needs for office supplies. Additional benefits include:

- a) Capturing economies of scale
- b) Ensuring compliance with applicable regulations or include the AbilityOne program, sustainable purchasing requirements, and the Trade Agreement Act (TAA).
- c) Fostering markets for sustainable technologies and environmentally preferable products by offering the most up-to-date items with various environmental attributes
- d) Simplifying data collection and enhancing transparency by enabling agencies to better manage spend and measure cost savings
- e) Enabling achievement of socioeconomic goals with companies of various business sizes and classifications such as small, small-women owned, small disadvantaged, small service-disabled veteran-owned, small disadvantaged women-owned, and large business.

**3. Why use the FSSI OS2 BPAs?**

The BPAs are designed to leverage the total government spend. As more agencies use them to purchase office supplies, we will hit volume discounts driving the prices even lower.

By purchasing office supplies through the BPAs, customers are able to ensure that they are meeting all relevant mandates and procurement regulations, most notably for “green” or sustainable items. The items on the BPAs, where applicable, meet product guidelines for green products, and when purchased in a large quantity (ie. by meeting the minimum purchasing thresholds), are transported sustainably as well.

Moreover, by using your GSA SmartPay card, you will automatically get the discounted FSSI prices, and your agency will benefit from getting credit card refunds in the process. Unlike buying office supplies retail, you can be assured that you are not paying sales tax, which your agency can monitor by receiving spend data to help keep prices down in the future.

The BPA prices have been proven to be better than any mass pricing discounts agencies can get on their own, and are easy to use, especially through *GSA Advantage!*

**4. How do I use the FSSI OS2 BPAs?**



GSA's goal is to make FSSI OS2 easy to use, and make it as easy as possible for all purchasing authorities and purchase cardholders to procure office supplies that are compliant with all applicable mandates.

For orders \$3,000 or less, use your GSA SmartPay card to make a purchase in the FSSI Office Supplies aisle of *GSA Advantage!* This is available by visiting [www.gsaadvantage.gov](http://www.gsaadvantage.gov) and clicking on "Office Supplies and Equipment – FSSI" under the "Products" tab at the top of the page.

DoD Email, walking in to a vendor's store, or otherwise contacting the vendor directly are other means of buying office supplies through FSSI OS2, though they are not as streamlined or easy to measure as purchasing through *GSA Advantage!*

For orders over \$3,000, please check with your Contracting Officer to understand your agency's specific purchasing policy.

**5. Who may use these BPAs?**

Anyone with a GSA SmartPay card, who works for either the federal government or the Department of Defense, can use the BPAs.

**6. Are federal agencies required to purchase from the BPAs?**

Many agencies have mandated that the FSSI OS2 BPAs

Some agencies have designated which BPA contractors to utilize, based on specific agency mandates. This process is done in accordance with FAR Part 8.405-3. The information is provided through your agency's FSSI representative.

**7. What is the FSSI OS2 BPA Period of Performance?**

The period of performance cannot exceed the period of performance of a given vendor's contract. Therefore, the BPA will expire on the expiration of the vendor's FAS contract against which the BPA is written or five years after award, whichever occurs first.

**8. What are the delivery requirements?**

Standard delivery is three to four business days by ground. Express, desktop, secure, and international delivery are all available, and may carry an extra fee. Orders below the minimum threshold of either \$25, \$50, or \$100 (depending on the vendor) may also carry a convenience fee.

In most circumstances, purchasing authorities and purchase cardholders can and should plan ahead for the procurement and delivery of office supplies. By doing so, the federal workforce generates two major benefits: First, we significantly decrease costs, as overnight delivery can add 10 to 20% of the cost of the item; Second, by placing fewer and larger orders, we reduce our impact on the environment and streamline the process for our employees.

**9. Why is there a minimum order requirement of \$25, \$50, or \$100? What if I don't need to order that much?**

One significant way to reduce the total cost of your order is to increase the order size. This also reduces the costs of all items in the FSSI OS2 over time. This process results in less paperwork, less tracking, and less reconciliation. Moreover, larger and fewer orders means that there are fewer trucks on the road making deliveries, reducing the federal government's financial and environmental footprint. GSA recommends that you consolidate your orders so that you have fewer total transactions to manage.



However, because it is not always possible to combine orders or otherwise meet the minimum purchase thresholds, some FSSI OS2 vendors will process smaller orders, often for a convenience fee.

**10. Are there multiple prices in GSA *Advantage*!?**

No. One of the requirements of the FSSI OS2 BPA is that whenever a purchase card is used, the agency benefits from the better pricing obtained on the BPAs in the long run. To implement this requirement, the 15 BPA holders have removed their existing pricelists from GSA *Advantage*!, replacing them with the BPA pricing.

**11. When did agencies start using the FSSI OS2 BPAs?**

Early adopters of the FSSI OS2 began using the BPAs leading into and during the fourth quarter of FY 2010.

**12. When did the first generation of FSSI for office supplies expire?**

The first generation of FSSI for office supplies expired on August 2, 2010.

**13. What are the competition requirements?**

No competition is required on orders below the micro-purchase threshold of \$3,000. For orders exceeding the micro-purchase threshold, your Contracting Officer can post your requirements on GSA e-Buy system and compete among the 15 BPA holders.

**14. Are these BPAs consistent with AbilityOne?**

Yes. All contractors are required to remain AbilityOne certified resellers.

**15. How will using the BPAs save money?**

The BPAs save money in several ways. First, they were competed: While prices of individual products vary constantly, the prices overall average 19 % lower than the GSA Schedule prices. Those Schedule prices themselves average 40 % lower than retail pricing. Second, the BPAs include significant volume-based discounts. As usage increases and the total spend reaches certain benchmarks across government, the prices will continue to drop. These volume discounts will kick in automatically, and all customers need to do is place orders with one of the FSSI vendors, ideally through GSA *Advantage*!

**16. Do the BPAs promote sustainability?**

Yes. The items on the BPAs meet Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines (CPG), provide for toner recycling, and include a vast array of remanufactured items. The delivery terms reduce the total number of shipments.